

## **African Commission should call on Sudan to release prominent activists facing stiff penalties in national security trial**

**20 February 2015** – Africa’s main human rights body should call on Sudan to ensure the prompt release of two well-known activists who face an unfair trial on 23 February 2015 on charges that carry harsh penalties including life imprisonment, the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), REDRESS, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) said today.

The four human rights organisations submitted a complaint today to the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR), asking it to take up this case, during its meeting in Banjul, The Gambia, which began on 19 February 2015. The African Commission is charged with monitoring the implementation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights to which Sudan is party.

The complaint concerns distinguished human rights defender Dr. Amin Mekki Medani, former Chairperson of the Sudanese Human Rights Monitor (SHRM), and Mr Farouq Abu Eissa, a political activist who is the Chairperson of the National Consensus Forces, an umbrella of political opposition groups in Sudan.

Both were arrested on 6 December 2014 by the Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS), after signing the “Sudan Call”, which committed the co-signatories to work to end the conflicts raging in Sudan and establish a “State of Citizenship and Democracy” to pave the way for legal, institutional and economic reforms. They were not charged upon arrest and were held in incommunicado detention for 16 days. Since their arrest, they have received inadequate medical care for their diabetes and other ailments, and the organisations are extremely concerned about their well-being, as both men are of an advanced age: Dr. Medani is 75 and Mr Abu Eissa 81.

The men have since been charged with several serious offenses against the State under the 1991 Criminal Act and the 2001 Anti-Terrorism Act and are facing trial before a court established under the anti-terrorism law that fails to meet fair trial guarantees.

The four human rights organisations consider that the detention and upcoming trial of Dr. Medani and Mr Abu Eissa are a reprisal for their legitimate activities and exercise of their rights to free expression, and claim that Sudan, by their unwarranted clamp down on them, has violated many of their rights, including to freedom of expression, freedom of association, personal liberty and protection from arbitrary arrest and detention, fair trial, health and to be free from torture and ill-treatment.

The organisations strongly urge Sudan to stop all acts of harassment and intimidation against civil society and human rights groups [currently underway](#) and to treat these two activists and other people unfairly detained in accordance with the rule of law, in particular, the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, and regional and international human rights instruments ratified by Sudan. The only crime that these men committed was to believe in a better Sudan, and to advocate for peaceful and democratic reforms for the benefit of all Sudanese.

We call on the diplomatic community in Sudan to monitor closely these proceedings, and encourage the African Union, the United Nations and international law groups to send monitors and encourage the Sudanese government to afford them unhindered access to proceedings.

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